

Wellesley needs a community garden

What do children and families gain from the experience of watching a garden grow? They witness the miracle of pulling from the ground a large carrot grown from a minuscule seed; so small if you are not careful the seed will blow out of your hand. They see the comedy of a rabbit nest located right in the heart of the garden. They know the beauty of watching sunflowers soar overhead, swaying gently in the breeze. They see those same sunflowers turn brown over the winter while their giant weeping heads provide seeds for the goldfinches. They smell the cilantro, parsley and mint. They discover the different varieties of colored beans, radishes and squash. Children eat what they grow—out of curiosity if nothing more. They watch with disappointment when the pumpkin they had been waiting for rots, but this develops some resiliency as they try again the next year. They listen to the gardeners interact, sharing tips and trading produce. Extra food they give to the food pantry, practicing the meaning of sharing and community. Children watch for wildlife: hummingbirds, deer, toads, snakes, lightening bugs, chipmunks, rabbits, gophers, hawks. They learn what it takes to tend a garden: the work and time required and the impact of weather, pests and pestilence.

Families from Wellesley can drive to Weston to Land Sake's Farm. They can drive to Needham's Volante Farms, but imagine what is means to families to walk or bike to their community garden in their own town? It's "their" garden and they can watch it year after year.

Imagine school children going to their own community garden to plant seeds in the spring only to return in the fall to see how many pumpkins have grown? Imagine school children taking the produce they grew themselves to the food pantry? Imagine school children making homemade salsa (reading recipes, measuring, working together) from tomatoes they picked themselves? Science unit possibilities are endless (Needham school children visit Eastman Conservation multiple times a year). Imagine the summer Recreation Department programming and so conveniently located next to Morse's Pond? Wellesley High School students have an incredibly strong Green Team—how is the town supporting our youth's environmental interests? In this age where environmental concerns only grow stronger every year (note Wellesley's solar power initiative this

FORUM

QUESTIONS? Contact Editor Cathy Brauner at 781-431-2003 or email cbrauner@wills.net

EDITORIAL

Using our gifts to help 300 girls

The special election is over, although the battle over the senior center, at least, probably is not. Residents on Tuesday voted "yes" on two ballot questions.

One "yes" vote enables the town to move ahead with the purchase of land next to the old American Legion site on Washington Street; the property will be used for parking for a stand-alone senior center. The other "yes" vote approves an override that will pay for, among other things, full-day kindergarten.

Wellesley is immensely fortunate to be able to consider spending its tax dollars on such programs. In many parts of the world, parents struggle to give their children, especially their daughters, the very basics of an education, such as pencils and books. Senior citizens in war-torn countries cannot find enough food and medical care to survive; to them, a dedicated senior center would be unimaginable.

It's easy to forget the plight of so many others in the world when we are considering what's needed locally. Indeed, one recent article noted that interest in the fate of the nearly 300 school girls abducted in Nigeria has already dropped dramatically. The story of the girls, most of whom are still missing, had its day in the media, but like other big events—the devastating typhoon in the Philippines, the whereabouts of Malaysia Flight 370—it has started to drop off the world's radar.

Wellesley invests heavily in the education of its own children, including the expensive technology needed to give them a good start in the world. As the school year comes to a close, we would like to see those students and their parents use these gifts to keep the heat on the world to find the missing girls.

Compassionate young Wellesley residents can't be in Nigeria, joining in the search. But they can use the tools at hand—Twitter, Facebook, and all the rest of the social media so familiar to them—and some part of their summer vacations to keep reminding those in a position to rescue the girls not to give up.

Young as they are, Wellesley's children can reach across cyberspace and hold on until their terrified counterparts in Nigeria are finally free.

WELLESLEY'S MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCES

Wellesley's program of Memorial Day observances will take place May 30. It includes two ceremonies:

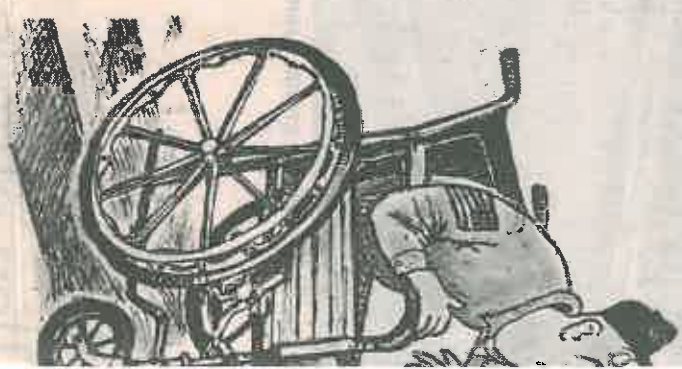
7 p.m., Woodlawn Cemetery:

- Invocation
- Reading of Past Year's Departed Veterans
- Salute to the Dead
- Taps
- Benediction

7:30 p.m., town War Memorial Site (across from main library):

- Welcome and Introduction
- Antenn
- Allegiance
- Memorial

LETTERS PC
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LETTERS TO THE EDIT Reminder -- there was a dump site on North 40

Before we get carried away, it would pay to check plans for the North 40 on file from the time about 20 years ago when people were excited about building an up-scale Wellesley retirement home there. One awkward problem proved to be the presence of an early town-gown dump site planners were agreed was best left undisturbed. If memory serves correctly, last week's front page showed about half the hypothetical house lots square on top of the dump, not exactly an ideal situation.

If problems with the dump and Weston Road traffic can be adequately addressed, acquiring land so centrally located may well be a good thing for the town as well as the college. On the other hand, taking on full responsibility for an old dump site these days is not something to be taken lightly.

-- Judith A. Nicolson, Wall Street

Sanarians grateful